

Collaborating Beyond Collections: Engaging Tribes in Museum Exhibits

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ABSTRACT

There has been—and continues to be—tension between Native peoples and museums in the United States due to past collecting practices and exhibitions that strive to interpret their culture and history without their involvement. Previously, many of these exhibitions stereotyped and lumped Native peoples together, depicting their cultures as static and interpreting them and their material culture from a Western scientific perspective. Changes are being made. Collaboration between Native peoples and museums in all areas of museum work, including exhibitions, is beginning to be considered by many as a best practice. Exhibitions developed in collaboration with Native peoples, with shared curatorial authority, decidedly help ease the historic tension between the two, and they are much more vibrant and accurate than when collaboration is lacking. This article will provide three examples of collaboration, defined with our tribal partners, to develop exhibitions at History Colorado, the state history museum, concluding with lessons learned.

Keywords: NAGPRA, exhibits, collections, collaboration, tribes, decolonization, consultation, shared curatorial authority

Existen ciertas tensiones, actualmente como también han existido en el pasado, entre poblaciones indígenas por un lado y museos en los Estados Unidos por el otro lado, acerca de las prácticas de adquirir ejemplares de culturas indígenas y de preparar exhibiciones de los mismos, sin involucrar a gente indígena. Las exhibiciones de este tipo en el pasado a menudo eran caracterizadas por observaciones estereotipadas que muchas veces agruparon distintas poblaciones indígenas como que fueron una sola. Además, el material cultural de las exhibiciones era presentado como estático y la interpretación del mismo era exclusivamente de la perspectiva científica occidental. Sin embargo, se ven cambios en la actualidad. Ahora muchos consideran que la colaboración entre comunidades indígenas y museos en todos los ámbitos de trabajo en los museos, incluso el de las exhibiciones, es la práctica o método más recomendable. Las exhibiciones preparadas con comunidades indígenas, en la que se comparte la responsabilidad, ayuda mucho en disminuir la falta de confianza entre los indígenas y las profesionales de los museos. Las exhibiciones colaborativas son más llamativas y correctas que las exhibiciones que carecen de esta colaboración. La ponencia actual proporciona tres ejemplos de colaboración, realizados con nuestros socios indígenas, en exhibiciones en History Colorado, el museo estatal de historia, lo cual concluye con lecciones aprendidas.

Palabras clave: exhibiciones, poblaciones indígenas, descolonización, consultación, colecciones de museos, autoridad curatorial compartida

There has been—and sometimes continues to be—a tension between museums and Native peoples in the United States due to collecting practices and exhibits that interpret Native peoples' cultures and history without their involvement. American museums amassed major collections in late 1800s and early 1900s due to fears that indigenous people were disappearing (Lonetree 2012). Ironically, mechanisms such as disrespect, disease, conflict, and assimilation strategies from the dominant culture where the collectors originated were contributing to this very situation. Exhibits stereotyped and lumped Native peoples together depicting their cultures as static and inferior and interpreting them and their material culture from a Western perspective (Lonetree 2012).

It was recognized as early as 30 years ago by some (Archambault 2011; Lonetree 2012) that change was needed. Museums such as the National Museum of the American Indian; Museum of Indian

Arts and Culture, Santa Fe; Denver Museum of Nature and Science; and the Autry Museum, Los Angeles, among others, began to establish collaborations between Native peoples and themselves in all areas of museums as a best practice. Several reasons for the change have been proposed: postmodernism and international conversations on human rights, American Indian activism in the 1960s, an increase in numbers of tribal museums (Lonetree 2012), and in the case of this article, passage of Public Law 101-601, 25 U.S.C. 3001 et seq, 104 Stat. 3048, the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA).

Exhibits developed in collaboration with Native peoples, with shared curatorial authority, decidedly help ease the historic tension between Native peoples and museums, and they are much more vibrant and accurate than when collaboration is lacking (Archambault 2011; Dovers et al. 2015; Gazi 2014; Shannon 2015;

Advances in Archaeological Practice 7(3), 2019, pp. 224–233
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DOI:10.1017/aap.2019.11

Swan and Jordan 2015). History Colorado's collaborative experiences in exhibit development, enabled by relationships established through NAGPRA compliance and defined by the museum's tribal partners, are detailed in the rest of the article.

NAGPRA Compliance at History Colorado

The State Historical Society of Colorado, doing business as History Colorado (HC), was established in 1879, just three years after Colorado became a state. It is located in Denver and organized differently from many state historical societies in that it contains three branches that are all housed at the Denver History Colorado Center: the state history museum, the Office of the State Archaeologist, and the State Historical Fund. It also has seven community museums located throughout the state.

HC curates approximately 15 million artifacts collected over 100 years, ranging in size from a seed bead or badge to a historic locomotive. The collection includes three-dimensional objects, archival materials, and more than one million photographs and negatives documenting the history of Colorado. The ethnographic collection consists of about 9,000 artifacts from over 60 tribes, mostly from the American Southwest, Great Plains, and Great Basin, although it also includes a small number of objects from tribes in other parts of the United States for comparative purposes. The archaeology collection contains about 20,000 artifacts, almost one-quarter of which was collected in the Mesa Verde region in the late 1800s to early 1900s.

In the case of HC, extensive consultation has been a very important factor in building relationships that have led to work in other areas such as collections care and exhibits. To date, HC has repatriated 863 individuals, 2,103 associated funerary artifacts, and 227 unassociated funerary artifacts through "Notices of Inventory Completion" and "Notices of Intent to Repatriate" published in the *Federal Register*, a requirement of NAGPRA. The agency has held dozens of consultations in order to accomplish this. HC's repatriation efforts of human remains and funerary artifacts are ongoing because the museum continues to receive Native American human remains that are inadvertently discovered on state and private lands and transferred to the museum from the Office of the State Archaeologist. It was an overwhelming task to delve into over 100 years of records to find all available information about the remains and artifacts possibly subject to NAGPRA and to update databases and prepare materials to share this information with potentially affiliated tribes. The work was supported by HC's leadership and assistance from the National NAGPRA Program located in Washington, DC (see Ambler and Goff 2013 for a detailed account of this effort). The effort enabled HC to get much better intellectual and physical control over its archaeological and ethnographic collections.

Because HC is a state agency, the government-to-government relationship is required. HC contacted tribal leadership with invitations to consult and met with the representatives designated by each tribe. The first consultation was held in 1995 with the Pawnee Nation of Oklahoma. HC has subsequently conducted numerous additional consultations, sometimes with individual tribes and at other times with groups of tribes, but most often with the Pueblos,

Navajo Nation, the three Ute tribes, the Northern Cheyenne, the Northern Arapaho, and the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma because the bulk of the collection is associated with them. HC focused first on the repatriation of human remains and associated funerary artifacts due to priorities tribes expressed to HC.

HC conducted comprehensive collections reviews of its archaeological and ethnographic artifacts during many consultations. These reviews included not only the artifacts that had been reported in summaries as potentially subject to NAGPRA but also those that the available information suggested were associated with consulting tribes. HC relied on designated representatives, tribal cultural experts, and elders to identify sacred objects or objects of cultural patrimony (Colwell 2017; Fine-Dare 2002; McKeown et al. 2010).

Early HC consultations were often tense because of the sensitive nature of what was discussed in the meetings. As is the case in most museums, HC had rarely met with American Indians prior to the requirement under NAGPRA, and there was an inherent distrust between tribes and the museum. There was one exception. HC had begun to form a relationship with the two tribes in Colorado, the Southern Ute Indian Tribe and the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, through its work on repatriation with the Colorado Commission of Indian Affairs, a state agency that functions as the liaison between the state and tribes. In the late 1980s, while NAGPRA was being developed, collaborative efforts were underway in Colorado to revise state law related to unmarked burials. This partnership enabled HC to establish relationships more successfully with the 46 other tribes currently identified as having ancestral ties to what is now Colorado.

Although it was not always easy, the establishment of relationships and recognition of and respect for the knowledge of tribal cultural experts has informed HC's understanding of the artifacts the museum curates as well as how they should be cared for, accessed, and used. It has also facilitated HC's work in other areas in the museum, such as collections management (Ambler and Goff 2013), development of exhibits, education programs, and public programming.

Exhibit Development

HC moved into its current building in 2011. The museum's annual visitation is roughly 200,000. Moving into a new building provided the museum with the opportunity to rethink how it could become more relevant and better serve the diverse visitors who enter its doors. Market research and visitor studies informed the museum as to who its visitors are, who was not being served, and what aspects of history interested visitors. Native American topics were one of those.

Living West

HC decided that its second core exhibit would present an environmental history with an eye on how Colorado history might inform the choices its citizens make today. The resulting exhibit is entitled *Living West*. In late 2009, HC staff and exhibit designers from the Science Museum of Minnesota began exploring possibilities for this exhibit. They decided to include one story in the

distant past, Ancestral Puebloans in the Mesa Verde region, and one in the recent past, the Dust Bowl, because of visitor studies. The third section of the exhibit focused on Colorado's mountains today, inviting visitors to think about past choices people made in response to their environment and to apply lessons learned to the present. Content was brought to visitors through written text, objects, media, images, and interactives. Exhibit space, resources, and collections were available to support such an exhibit.

HC drafted a list of possible exhibit components for the Mesa Verde section centered around four main topics: the thriving culture created by the diverse Ancestral Pueblo people with a focus on the periods between AD 900 and AD 1300; their understanding of, adaptation to, and management of their environment; the many reasons for their migration from the Mesa Verde region in the late 1200s; and the multiple ways people learn about the past in the American Southwest.

With these general ideas in mind, HC looked for content experts, and two groups instantly came to mind: the living descendants of the Ancestral Puebloans and archaeologists at Crow Canyon Archaeological Center (CCAC), known for their research in the Mesa Verde region and, more importantly, for decades of collaboration with Pueblo people.

In early 2012, when HC was ready to move forward with the exhibit, it contacted tribal leaders of the 21 modern-day Pueblos in New Mexico, Texas, and Arizona, informing them that HC was planning a new exhibit on the environmental history of Colorado and that the museum would like to include a section on the Mesa Verde region. The HC team solicited their opinions, asking if there was interest in collaborating with the museum on developing it. Although *Living West* was not a NAGPRA project, HC approached it that way, going to the tribal leaders after the decision to work together was made and asking them whom they would like HC to work with. In most cases, it turned out to be the NAGPRA representatives. Because of HC's NAGPRA work, a trust relationship had already been established that enabled HC to move forward more easily.

Representatives from 10 tribes attended the first face-to-face consultation meeting in May 2012 in Santa Fe, New Mexico. HC did not arrive at this consultation with a preconceived idea of what the exhibit would be, which is important when beginning a collaborative project. HC had a general theme, which was shared with the representatives. HC discussed the common misconceptions about Ancestral Pueblo people that the visitor studies had revealed. One of many examples was that most members of the general public thought that Ancestral Pueblo people had disappeared.

Many of the representatives present that day had previously participated in NAGPRA collections reviews at HC, so the HC team was able to discuss how its collections could support the content. HC talked about other ways the museum hoped to deliver content. Most importantly, HC asked the representatives for feedback on the museum's ideas and what they wanted to see in an exhibit about the Mesa Verde region.

Tribal representatives agreed with HC's proposal of telling their history in the context of the land and the environment. HC asked specifically what descendant communities wanted visitors to know

about them and their ancestors. Several ideas floated to the top of the list. They wanted visitors to understand that Ancestral Pueblo people did not "disappear" or "abandon" the Mesa Verde region but rather "migrated from" or "depopulated" the area (Figure 1) and that there is cultural continuity. Because there had been several recent publications about violence in the Mesa Verde region in the late 1200s, representatives wanted to remind visitors that violence has occurred throughout human history. They also wanted visitors to know that while there are cultural similarities among Pueblo people today, there are also differences in language and culture. One similarity, past and present, is the importance of corn and water to Pueblo people (Figure 2). Finally, they wanted visitors who traveled to Pueblo archaeological sites to treat them with respect.

In the discussion of interactives, representatives approved some of HC's suggestions, asked HC to cut one, and proposed others (Figure 3). HC eliminated a corn-grinding activity since all representatives agreed that playing with grinding corn belittled the importance of corn in their culture. They asked HC not to interpret pottery designs because meaning varies among the Pueblos and, in some cases, is restricted knowledge that is not shared with the outside world.

At the end of the first meeting, HC asked representatives how the collaborative process should proceed. They suggested that HC work with a smaller group of representatives they would select. Ultimately, the tribal advisory team consisted of men and women, old and young, representing the different language groups of the Pueblos. The tribal advisory team would keep the other Pueblos informed. Taking into account both the exhibit development timeline and the busy schedule of advisory team members, they proposed that the bulk of the work be conducted over the telephone and/or through email. As a result, there was one more face-to-face meeting in late 2012 and one gathering to produce footage for the exhibit in the summer of 2013, along with countless e-mails and phone calls.

In the end, the advisory team reviewed graphic panels, object lists, object labels and cases, videos, images, and interactives. They also participated in the videos. Sharing curatorial authority and respecting the expertise of tribal cultural experts results in better interpretation (Gazi 2014; Lonetree 2012; Shannon 2015), and this is what occurred. For example, one graphic panel was written by the Hopi representative because HC had failed to correctly capture the information he wished to convey.

The Ute Indian Museum

One of HC's community museums, the Ute Indian Museum, is located in Montrose, Colorado, five hours west of Denver, near the former ranch of Chief Ouray, one Ute leader. Its location is also the center of the aboriginal territory of the Southern Ute Indian Tribe (Colorado), the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe (Colorado), and the Ute Indian Tribe of the Uintah and Ouray Reservation (Utah). It is one of a few state-owned museums in the United States dedicated to one cultural group. It originally opened in 1956 without any tribal input. The museum has diverse visitors. Tribal members stop in as they travel among the three Ute reservations. International travelers visit while taking advantage of the hiking and biking in the area. Local residents and school groups regularly take field trips to the museum.



FIGURE 1. Exhibit case on left addressing migration from the Mesa Verde region. (Photograph courtesy of Science Museum of Minnesota.)



FIGURE 2. Smart Choices section addressing importance of water. (Photograph courtesy of Science Museum of Minnesota.)

Recognizing the importance of this museum, which is dedicated to the history and culture of Colorado's longest continuous residents, the state authorized money to expand the museum in the mid-2000s, later rescinding that money in 2008 with the national economic crisis, and then reinstating it in 2012. Expansion meant HC could also create new exhibits, this time in collaboration with the Ute tribes. The state did not provide funding for exhibits,

however. Instead, money was raised through generous donations from members of the Montrose community and the tribes and was provided by an Advancing Informal STEM Learning National Science Foundation grant.

Following the NAGPRA model, the HC exhibit team contacted the leadership of the three Ute tribes asking if they were interested in



FIGURE 3. Importance of yucca, with cordage-making interactive. (Photograph courtesy of Science Museum of Minnesota.)

collaborating on the project and if they would appoint representatives to work with HC. Early on, HC also inquired about the degree of involvement the tribes wanted, and they wanted to be involved in everything. From 2013 to 2017, there were 13 face-to-face consultation meetings and countless telephone conversations, e-mails, and informal discussions. Tribal consultation informed all architectural elements of the building expansion and the exhibit content, including the layout, interpretive themes, images, graphic panels, object selection, object identification labels, videos, and interactives.

Such extensive collaborations require commitment, time, and money. HC leadership set aside funds for reimbursement of tribal members' travel expenses and for stipends, when appropriate. Tribal representatives, who had many responsibilities beyond the exhibit, set aside time, sometimes traveling three to five hours to attend consultation meetings.

Unlike with *Living West*, HC arrived at the first consultation meeting with no architectural ideas or overarching theme for the exhibits. The team did present a budget and explained that going from a wish list to reality would be affected by funding and space. For the building, tribal participants generated a list of elements that they felt represented them, for example, natural materials such as stone and wood, curves, color, representations of past homes, and the mountains. There was much back-and-forth between the architect, HC, and the tribes, but the end result met the needs of all, despite the fact that a few items had to be eliminated from the wish list.

HC's lengthy history of work on repatriation with the three Ute tribes enabled the museum again to move forward more easily on this project because a relationship had been established between HC and the tribes. Nonetheless, the museum still had lessons to

learn, such as how important it was to understand and honor the tribal request to be included in all decisions. The original architectural plans called for three representations of Ute brush structures, symbolizing each tribe, but the budget would not allow it. So as not to offend, HC mistakenly eliminated all three elements. When the new drawings were presented to the tribes, they were outraged that these important elements had been removed. In the end, HC was able to include one, which satisfied the tribes. HC learned that involvement in all decisions meant both the easy and the difficult ones.

For the exhibits, HC again asked what the representatives wanted visitors to learn about them. In the first meetings, the conversations produced more ideas than could fit into the 1,800-square-foot exhibit space. The most important ideas included: We have been here since time immemorial. We are still here. Our culture is alive and thriving (Figure 4). We experienced but survived hard times such as land loss (Figures 5 and 6). We want this to be a place where our children can learn about their history. Former Chairman Manual Heart of the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe added, "The museum needs to draw people in, make them feel empathy, and have them leave wanting to learn more" (Notes from tribal consultation meeting, February 5, 2017, on file at HC).

Representatives asked the exhibit team to present possible ways in which to arrange the content. They voted on the four presented and selected one: a geographical journey through Colorado, visiting places in Ute aboriginal territory important to Ute people. As Regina Lopez-Whiteskunk of the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe said, "Our history is written on the land" (Notes from tribal consultation meeting, August 4, 2015, on file at HC). HC hired EDX of Seattle, an exhibit designer with experience working with tribes, and moved the project from paper to 3-D.



FIGURE 4. Contemporary Life, Ute Indian Museum. (Photograph courtesy of History Colorado, image by Will Austin.)



FIGURE 5. Treaties and Land Loss, Ute Indian Museum. (Photograph courtesy of History Colorado, image by Will Austin.)

One thing that was particularly helpful was a prototype, or “box exhibit.” In an empty gallery in the Denver location, the exhibit team taped out on the floor the exact size that the new exhibit would be. The team then divided the content into sections and filled those sections with papers representing graphic panels and video screens and boxes representing exhibit cases. In this way, everyone could see how content had to be narrowed. This

exercise enabled the moving of “walls” and “cases” to better meet everyone’s wishes. Alden Naranjo, Southern Ute Indian Tribe former NAGPRA coordinator stated, “This exhibit is just a small part—a sliver of the story of Ute people” (Lee 2018:1).

Object selection was enhanced by two collections reviews. HC’s Ute collection consists of about 800 objects, most of which were



FIGURE 6. Hard Times, Ute Indian Museum. (Photograph courtesy of History Colorado, image by Will Austin.)

made in the late 1800s/early 1900s, with one exception. In 2014, HC received a donation of traditional and contemporary objects belonging to a Southern Ute religious and political leader who passed away in 2012. Preparing for a collections review of a collection this large is a time-consuming yet extremely worthwhile task. HC reviewed all the information it had about each object and updated object records. After compiling a summary of how the objects were acquired, HC made binders for tribal representatives that included this information as well as additional details in the event that NAGPRA items were identified.

For the first collections review, HC pulled all objects thought to be Ute from storage shelves and placed them on tables so that the tribal representatives could see them easily. For the second collections review, tribes and HC met at the Ute Indian Museum to evaluate the objects prior to deinstallation for the expansion. These had been on exhibit for quite some time and had been selected without tribal participation. Both meetings proved very useful because HC learned more about some objects and corrected errors in the records. Some objects were too culturally sensitive to exhibit. Others had to be exhibited in specific ways, such as headdresses (straight trailer, facing east) or shawls (right overlaps left). HC also recognized that the collection lacked sufficient numbers of contemporary objects and worked with tribal members to acquire loans. With this information, HC proposed object lists for tribal representatives to edit. Once revised, object identification labels were presented to the tribes for consideration.

HC did not produce new exhibit videos. In the research process, museum staff learned of many videos that had already been made, many including the tribal representatives, who did not see the need to “reinvent the wheel.” HC gained permission to use

and shorten existing footage. To ensure that what the tribal representatives felt was important was included in the exhibit, HC spent many meetings sharing food and watching videos with them.

In one of the last consultation meetings, HC printed life-sized drafts of graphic panels with text and images, taped them to walls in an empty gallery space, and encouraged the representatives to take pen to panel and make changes. Representatives wanted the use of first person. Inclusion of Ute words led to discussions about how to spell them because the Ute language was not a written language and representatives differed on “correct” spellings. In a few instances, tribal history and that offered by archaeologists and historians were not the same; in such cases, rather than privileging one perspective, both were equally acknowledged. Ultimately, HC explained this phenomenon to visitors. HC consciously juxtaposed historic and contemporary images on graphic panels whenever possible.

As with *Living West*, HC was again reminded that words matter. For example, when talking about tribal businesses, the representatives preferred “enterprise” to “business.” Likewise, they did not like the use of the word “nomadic” to describe their seasonal rounds, which to them implied aimless wandering, whereas their seasonal rounds were clearly deliberate and conditioned by their extensive knowledge of the landscape. Prior to printing panels and labels, HC verified final edits by email and production, and the installation occurred.

The opening was a two-day event. It was a collaboration between the tribes, the museum, the city of Montrose, and the state of Colorado. The first day, planned by the representatives, was a private, tribal-only event, starting with a sunrise ceremony and breakfast, flag raising, speeches by dignitaries, viewing of the

exhibits, and a buffalo feast. This was the first time flags from the three Ute nations flew along with the US and Colorado flags at this location. The buffalo feast was made possible by a contribution of bison meat by one tribe, fry bread was cooked on location by another, and additional food items were donated by the third tribe. Students from the culinary class of the Montrose High School cooked and served the food. In opening remarks, coauthor Betsy Chappoose, Director of Cultural Rights and Protection for the Ute Indian Tribe, shared with tribal visitors that the museum truly had become a welcoming place for them. Approximately 500 Ute people attended along with the core exhibit team from HC. This is significant when the combined membership in the three Ute tribes is approximately 6,400, and the reservations are three to five hours away from the museum. The public opening occurred the next day and consisted of the flag raising, speeches by dignitaries—including Colorado's lieutenant governor—a feast, traditional music and dancing, a craft fair, and exhibit viewing. At least 1,000 people attended.

The Ute Indian Museum has evolved into what Lonetree (2012:19) would call a hybrid museum. The museum is owned by the state of Colorado and is not on a reservation. However, the Ute voice, worldview, and perspectives are privileged. HC consciously included information about cultural survival and vibrancy along with the difficult stories of conflict, invasion, land loss, and cultural degradation experienced during westward expansion and the assimilation and relocation periods. HC has endeavored to make the museum a place that welcomes everyone so that Native and non-Native alike can learn about Ute people. The exhibit development process was challenging because it included the redesign of the building as well as what is inside it. In addition, the tribes reside in three different places, while the exhibit team lives in a fourth. Nevertheless, the museum has been well received by tribal members and visitors in general.

Informed by consultation, educational programs have been developed. They include facilitated hands-on activities in the exhibit so that visitors will understand the loss of ancestral lands through treaties, the traditional process to tan hides, the mathematics used in beadwork, the engineering used to build wicki-ups, and the science used to make basketry water jars waterproofed with pinyon sap. There is a Ute speaker series for adult visitors. The museum has a small changing gallery to exhibit the works of contemporary Ute artists so that there will continue to be something new for visitors to see.

The Ute Indian Museum received such positive acceptance that a similar exhibit opened in the Denver History Colorado Center in December 2018 to serve metropolitan visitors who cannot go to Montrose and, more importantly, the 35,000 fourth graders who visit the museum as part of their Colorado history unit. It is a core exhibit and will be in place for several years. At the opening reception, Southern Ute Cultural Preservation NAGPRA Coordinator Cassandra Atencio said, "When you walk into that exhibit, you will see vibrancy—because our people are thriving and that shows in there" (Lee 2018:1).

Plans are under way to conduct summative evaluations of the exhibits so that HC and the tribes can understand whether the exhibits are delivering what everyone intended. If not, revisions will be made.

Cheyenne and Arapaho Peoples

HC is currently collaborating with the Northern Cheyenne Tribe, the Northern Arapaho Tribe, and the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma to complete an exhibit that will include the Sand Creek Massacre of 1864. More than 200 Cheyenne and Arapaho people—mostly women and children, but also many chiefs—were slaughtered. Congressional findings at the time concluded that it was a massacre, and in 2014, the governor of Colorado, John Hickenlooper, formally apologized to the tribes.

In HC's former building, there was an exhibit on this event—the result of multiple consultation meetings. Because the staff involved in the 2012 exhibit was under time pressure to get the building open and was new to working with tribes, they developed an exhibit on their own and then presented the finished plans to tribal representatives. They failed to begin by contacting tribes associated with the massacre to gauge their feelings about the exhibit concept, asking them if they wished to be involved in its development, and finding out what that involvement would look like. Staff likely thought that since the content was the same, additional consultation was not needed. Although the content was quite similar, the manner in which it was presented and interpreted was not, including the use of certain words to which the tribes objected.

From the moment they saw the plans, the tribes asked that the exhibit not open, and once it did, they asked that it be closed. In 2013, after the museum's efforts to change it to meet tribal wishes failed, it was closed and deinstalled. This experience prompted the tribes to formalize the collaboration process with HC. A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) was established to outline how HC would interpret tribal history and culture and how it would use objects in the collection that had been removed from the massacre site. In 2014, HC held the first consultation meeting under the MOA to discuss an exhibit, solicit input, and identify the degree of desired tribal involvement. In 2017, HC held a comprehensive collection review similar to the one completed for the Ute exhibits. HC is now actively engaged in developing content collaboratively and determining if the exhibit will address the massacre only or if it will be more expansive and include previous history and culture along with contemporary lives.

Lessons Learned

Collaboration between museums and Native peoples is essential if museums aim to create meaningful and accurate exhibits. It is not possible to tell a Native story without Native voices and perspectives. The three examples in this article illustrate that collaboration is a dynamic, exciting, and challenging reciprocal process. It is born from establishing relationships and jointly determining what the collaborative process will look like. It is important to recognize that tribes are diverse and that the process may vary depending on whom the museum is working with. It is also critical that exhibit staff support the collaborative effort—which was the case at HC. Goff was curator on *Living West* and the Ute projects, while Cook was exhibit developer on both. Voirol was project manager for the Ute projects and involved in the beginning stages of *Living West*. From HC's successes and mistakes, we share the lessons we learned.

TABLE 1. Consultation Guides.

Title	URL
Government-to-Government Consultation Toolkit. The Arizona State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community (SRP-MIC)	https://sites.google.com/view/az-consultation-toolkit/home
State Tribal Consultation Guide: An Introduction for Colorado State Agencies to Conducting Formal Consultations with Federally Recognized American Indian Tribes. Colorado Commission of Indian Affairs, Hanschu, Chantalle, Ernest House Jr., and Joseph Garcia	https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/sites/default/files/atoms/files/CO%20State-Tribal%20Consultation%20Guide_0_0.pdf
2017 Museum + Community Guidelines for Community Collaboration. School for Advanced Research.	http://sarweb.org/guidelinesforcollaboration/pdf/museum-community-guidelines.pdf

If a museum has not already developed a relationship with a particular tribe or tribes, it is important to do so before asking if they want to be part of the project. Attend an event they are participating in or invite a tribal member to coffee or a meal. Face-to-face time, both formal and informal, is the best way to build or maintain a relationship. As stated earlier, HC is a state agency, so the museum follows the government-to-government consultation process for NAGPRA in its collaborative work. Staff of a smaller museum, without the need or means to follow this model, can contact their state’s Indian commission, larger museums, or tribal cultural offices for information on how to reach out to tribal representatives. Several consultation guides are currently available that help clarify some of the protocols involved when working with tribes (Table 1).

When beginning a collaborative project, it is important not to arrive at the first meeting with a preconceived notion of what the exhibit will be, looking for only a “rubber stamp of approval.” Also, all parties involved need to set clear expectations, establish the parameters within which the work will be conducted, and determine the process that will be followed, including communication strategies. Communication must be frequent. A collaborative project must benefit all parties involved. HC has heard that exhibits need to be in places not only where non-Native people can learn about Native history and culture but also where Native youth can learn about—and perhaps even research—their own history and culture.

Meaningful collaboration takes commitment, time, and money. Tribal cultural representatives are incredibly busy and travel sometimes as much as 75% of the time. The timeline for a museum’s project will likely need to be longer to accommodate this. The project is not the only responsibility that tribal representatives have, and it is likely to be less important to them than it is to the museum. If immediate responses to e-mails or phone calls are not obtained or a deadline passes, it is critical not to assume either approval or lack of interest. Exercise patience and keep reaching out.

Tribal representatives are experts and know other cultural experts in their tribes. They need to be treated in that way. A piece of advice HC received from tribal representatives was that they do not negotiate their history and culture. Western and Native learning styles are not always the same. Listening on the part of museum staff plays a very important role in the collaborative process. Staff members need to repeat back to the representatives what they have heard to avoid misunderstandings. Aside from giving cultural experts respect for their knowledge and their

willingness to share it by agreeing to participate in a museum project, museums need to compensate them for consulting. Depending on the tribe, this may be a stipend but will also include reimbursement for travel expenses. It is also important to accept that some knowledge is not meant to be shared.

Once the project is complete, it is time to celebrate, enjoy, and maintain the relationship that has been established between the museum and the tribal representatives. Although it is not necessary to continue formal consultation meetings, tribal representatives should be kept apprised of events at the museum that may be of interest. Museum staff should let them know about reactions to the exhibit and visit with them when the occasion arises.

Data Availability Statement

No original data were presented in this article.

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